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A

LETTER

TO THE

Rt. Hon. CHARLES JAMES FOX,

UPON THE

DANGEROUS AND INFLAMMATORY

T E N D E N C Y

OF HIS

LATE CONDUCT IN PARLIAMENT.

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A
L E T T E R

TO THE

Rt. Hon. CHARLES JAMES FOX:

S I R,

WERE it not for the peculiar circumstances of these times, under which it seems to have been reserved for men to grow formidable by the decay of their influence, and to derive additional importance from the decline of their credit and character, it would not have been necessary for me to have troubled you with this address at this conjuncture. The secession of your friends would have left you without power to be hurtful, and your weakness would have proved your protection.

BUT since there has arisen a new and unknown danger to the Constitution of these Kingdoms ;

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since a party has been formed in secrecy and silence, not to destroy its balance by giving preponderance to any one of its parts, as has sometimes been attempted, but with such open and avowed hostility to the system itself as to threaten the whole of our establishment with dissolution and ruin; since the turbulence and discontent of the ignorant and seduced part of the society has burst forth in so many partial acts of insurrection and tumult, and seems to wait only for a leader to begin the central and regular attack; there is much to apprehend from disappointed and desperate ambition; and it seems reasonable to fear, lest, rejected and abandoned by the persons with whom you have so long acted in public life, you should attempt to regain the situation you have forfeited, or to repair the connexions you have lost, by other means than those of penitence and concession.

Your talents, Sir, if you should chuse to prostitute them in so abandoned a cause, will always render you a formidable opponent, not only to any Administration, but to all, not only to Governments, but to Constitutions. You may become the MIRABEAU of any Revolution; your abilities, your ambition, and your disappointments, seem already to inspire hope into the enemies of your country, and there is nothing which can save either it or yourself but your virtues.

IN examining into the situation of this Country, and defining the dangers to which it is exposed, it is to these that I shall frequently appeal ; and in speaking of the duties of Englishmen, I shall take the liberty to remind you more particularly of yours, who have long occupied a post as honourable as any she has to confer, and as worthy of enlightened ambition to desire ; a post which, if not the highest in the State, is, if I may be excused such an expression, something very superior to the second ; and which offers as many occasions of deserving well of the Public, and perhaps more of uniting their admiration and esteem (occasions, Sir, which you have frequently seized, and rewards which you have often enjoyed), than, perhaps, would have fallen to your lot had you been in more complete possession of your wishes, and intrusted with the first executive office of the Government.

BUT to controul is at least as glorious as to direct ; and the deference which your Country has almost constantly paid to your opinion was but the more honourable to you, as you were removed from the means of influence and the authority of office. The confidence of the Public seemed to attach to your person, and you held your reputation, and the power you derived

from it, independent of favour, and liable only to change from causes which could alone proceed from yourself—your own neglect, imprudence, or ambition.

If such a post has its honours, and you know, Sir, they are too great to have been often well exchanged for any others, it has its duties too; and these of so much dignity and importance, of so serious and sacred a nature, that it may well be doubted, whether the occupation of any other in the kingdom be attended with so great and moral a responsibility as this is. Bound by no oath, and amenable to no tribunal, the chief of an English Opposition is called to that high pre-eminence by the silent suffrages of the Country; for they would deceive you, Sir, who would tell you, that you hold it of this House or of that, or of an union of families, or that you were elected to it by the party over which you appear to preside. Those who support the Government, as well as they who oppose it, have at least confirmed your election, and all have been ready to acknowledge your services, and confess to have profited by your advice. Not a party, but the kingdom itself have voted you to this moral chancery, where you sit to check and controul Administration on the one hand, and to instruct and enlighten the people on the other. It is but
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one half of your duty to oppose wrong councils, it remains for you to give vigour and efficacy to the best ; for as, on the one hand, the people naturally confide in your vigilance and fidelity to resist whatever may be hostile to their interests; so, on the other, they expect that you will join in all such measures of Administration as are either necessary or beneficial to them ; and that, far from opposing or retarding, from a jealousy of power, or even of benefits, you will set them the example of content and unanimity.

It is hard to say, whether the leader of a party in the House of Commons would most desert his post, and most betray the duties of his station, by assenting to illegal or dangerous measures, or by opposing such as were legal and necessary. The crime is certainly the same, and a greater crime it is difficult to imagine ; but the ill consequences might be more or less fatal, according to circumstances which it is impossible to define. The Fate of Liberty and the Salvation of the Kingdom may depend upon either.

HAVING said thus much of the nature and importance of your situation, it would be natural to ask you, Whether it be such as to be lightly abandoned, or fastidiously exchanged for the transient

transient popularity that seems to court you? and, Whether there be any thing in the fame of a BAILLY, or a PETHION, or in their power either, that a man like you should envy? But I must hasten to speak of the situation of the Country, without which it would be impossible for me to explain the tendency of your late conduct, or to recommend to you with the energy and the success which I hope for, a better and a happier road to glory than that which lies through the ashes of the Constitution, and is to be cut thro' the ruins of your Country.

It was early foreseen that the Revolution which had been effected in a neighbouring kingdom, and the doctrines and principles which had been diffeminated with so much industry among the most numerous classes of society, had a tendency to introduce a love of novelties, and to relax the antient attachment of the people to the form of the Government, and even to the Orders which composed it; and it was apprehended besides from the ancient treachery and ill-dissembled antipathy of that country, that it would not scruple to seduce and inflame the minds of the people, and to prepare and kindle the fuel of discontent and insurrection. Already had the press teemed with inflammatory publications, and clubs and meet-
ings

ings were formed, that openly corresponded with the seditious societies of France, who applauded their proceedings, and dispersed at a considerable expence such writings as were most likely to encourage the flame. Sedition and insurrection were reduced into catechisms, manuals, and vade-mecums, and the science of rebellion was digested into portable volumes and pocket-books, and adapted to every man's purse and capacity. Early in the spring, the attention of Government was directed towards this alarming object, and the King's Proclamation * appeared to have been attended with the most salutary effects. A Club in particular which assembled under a very specious name, seemed to be virtually dissolved by the secession of its most respectable members, the most distinguished of whom thought it necessary to justify himself with great anxiety to the County which he represented, and abjured with much publicity the opinions which he had been suspected to entertain. If other gentlemen thought proper to remain longer in the society, it was hoped that they expected a more favourable opportunity to withdraw; and it was considered that the general expression of the sense of the country, as well as the particular remonstrances of their own friends and connections, could not fail to bring them

* May 25th, 1792.

back to a more temperate and constitutional line of conduct ; and much was to be pardoned, as ; in fact, little was to be apprehended—from the eccentricities of their unexperienced ambition: Your conduct, Sir, in particular, who had never condescended to belong to this meeting, was peculiarly and deservedly applauded, and men were willing to see nothing but civility and good-humour in the obliging expressions you thought proper to use towards persons with whom you declined to co-operate. In the mean time, addresses replete with expressions of loyalty and attachment to the Constitution poured in from every quarter of the kingdom, and the public tranquillity appeared to be seated upon the firmest basis which it was possible to find, considering the fermentation that had spread all over the Continent, and the impending war in the Low Countries, the events of which seemed likely to destroy the balance of power, and threatened the Independence of a great part of Europe.

THE Government, sensible of the importance of peace, by which it had already been enabled not only to diminish the public burthens, but to extinguish a part of the national debt, desired nothing so much as its continuance : it relied for internal tranquillity, not only upon the late general assurances of content and satisfaction,

tion, but upon the great prosperity of the kingdom, and the increasing happiness of the people; and having already recovered its ascendancy in the political scale of Europe, it could scarcely apprehend that it would be wantonly provoked or insulted by any Power; and least of all by that in particular which had already called for the good offices of Great-Britain with its allies*, and dreaded the accession of Prussia and the United Provinces to the quarrel of the Court of Vienna.

It is a fact within my own knowledge, that the conduct of the English Government at that period gave great satisfaction at Paris. Far from being tempted by the opportunity of revenge, or seduced by the hope of aggrandizement, it seemed to have forgotten the treachery of France in the late war, in which she had taken part in our civil dissensions, and at the peace, when she enriched herself by tearing from us many of our most valuable possessions, which she divided, without shame or decency, between herself and her allies. Acknowledging without reserve the principle, that every nation possesses the right to legislate for itself, it abjured all claims and pretensions to interference, and engaged itself to the strictest and most impartial

* Official Note of Mons. de Chauvelin to Lord Grenville, June 18th, 1792.

neutrality; and even promised its good offices to procure the return of tranquillity as soon as its mediation should become acceptable to all the belligerent parties, without which it would be perfectly useless *.

THEY either want good faith or good information who would endeavour to misrepresent the conduct of the English Government upon this occasion, and to interpret its declining to assume the character of a mediator into a coldness or aversion to the new Government in France, to which, as long as it could be confounded with the cause of Liberty, or mistaken for it, not only the Administration but the whole Country were friendly. It is not to you, Sir, that it can be necessary to prove, that a mediation which is undertaken at the desire of one of the contending Powers, and not at the common solicitation of both, is nothing less, let diplomats call it by what name they will, than a menace, and a conditional declaration of hostilities against the party which shall refuse to accept of it, or to agree to the stipulations it determines to impose.

ON the part of France, it was declared by Monsieur de Chauvelin, that the “ rights of all

* Lord Grenville's Note in answer, July 8th.

“ the

“ the allies of Great-Britain who should not
 “ have provoked France by any acts of hostility,
 “ should be respected by that Power ;” and it
 is not only in the name of the King, but of the
 people of France, that he declares, that “ every
 “ war is essentially unjust which is not made ne-
 “ cessary by the duty of a lawful defence *.”

ON the tenth of August the Executive Power
 was suspended by the Legislative Assembly, and
 Lord Gower soon after withdrew from Paris,
 leaving a Secretary of legation.

It does not appear that the withdrawing of
 our Ambassador gave, at that time, any offence
 to the Executive Council; and if it did, it
 could only be attributed to its ignorance in di-
 plomatic affairs. Indeed, it was not till after the
 memorable thirtieth of September, when the
 Duke of Brunswick retreated from the plains of
 Champagne †, that the infant but aspiring Re-
 public

* June 18th, 1792.

† The curiosity of the world has been exercised in its high-
 est degree to explore the causes of this unexpected event. It
 has been asserted in the first political circles, and even declared
 by an English nobleman, that the Duke of Brunswick protested
 at Brussels with tears in his eyes, that “ he had not been cor-
 rupted by Dumourier, and that posterity would do him justice.”
 —*Credat Judæus!*—The next supposition which has met with
 C a any

public began to measure itself with Great-Britain. Since this period it has renewed with redoubled vigour its correspondence in the kingdom; it has received at its bar deputations of discontented and mutinous Englishmen; it has declared itself the ally of all nations who should be desirous to shake off their antient government; and it has given every species of encouragement to faction and insurrection wherever it

any great degree of credit is, that this second-rate politician had the address to alarm the King of Prussia with regard to the fidelity of his allies, and represented to him the Emperor of Germany and the Empress of Russia as confederated to fall upon his dominions, and reduce him to the original insignificance of the House of Brandenburg.—But there is one circumstance I have heard lately asserted with so much confidence, and of so wonderful a nature, that before I assign the true reason of this extraordinary retreat, I shall take some slight notice of it. The King of Prussia is a Catechumen of the *Illuminés*, and generally supposed to be well versed in the profound secrets and mysteries of *Françmaçonnerie*. There is a favourite after-piece very much demanded at Paris, called “ Les Deux Pages,” in which the celebrated Fleury represents Frederick the Second. The resemblance between the late monarch and the actor is exceedingly uncommon. This circumstance inspired the profound Dumourier with the thought of making Fleury act that part with the King, which Mademoiselle Oliva had performed so well with the Cardinal de Rohan. Fleury did not fail to dissuade the King from the war, and the Duke of Brunswick retreated by the command of the ghost. I shall not contest this point with *Messieurs les Illuminés*, I revere their profound science, but I am persuaded by the actual alliance of the Courts of Vienna and Berlin, and their joint prosecution of
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it found it, and employed its emissaries and the remains of its wealth to create discontent, and nourish the desire of change and Revolution, not only in our towns and populous cities, but even in our villages and the cottages of our poor. There is no man of plain sense who doubts that France has actually been in a state of hostilities with England during several months past, if the pacific spirit of the Government had not dissembled, as long as it was able, the of-

the war, that the King of Prussia treated the advice of the spectre with all the contempt it deserved. In fact, when a king is once fairly dead and buried, he has no right to come and take the command of his successor's army, nor to beat a retreat in an enemy's country. If there are any persons inclined to dispute this extraordinary story, which I can assure them it is thought vulgar to doubt of, I shall present them with a plain fact, which it will not rack their credulity to believe.

On the 29th of September orders were given by the Duke of Brunswick Lunenbourg to put the Prussian army in order of battle. From the dispositions then made, all military persons that I have conversed with, whether French or foreigners, have agreed, that Dumourier's army must not only have been beaten but cut off. But these orders were suddenly countermanded, upon information given to the Duke by the commander in chief of the artillery, that there was no ammunition in the camp, and that the magazines could not supply powder for half an hour's service of the artillery. This gentleman, it is presumed, had been gained by Dumourier : he is actually a prisoner in the castle of Spandau, where he is to be tried shortly, with eleven subaltern officers implicated with him in the same accusation. His name is *Templehoff*, and he is a Colonel, which is the highest rank of engineer, as I understand, in the Imperial army.

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fences, the insults, and the injuries we have received. Whether it be owing to this forbearance on our part, or to the intoxication of success, which, operating upon the natural vanity of Frenchmen, has produced a fanaticism of the most extraordinary nature and description which has ever appeared in the world, I will not take upon me to determine. But, encouraged probably by the one and decided by the other, the Executive Council seems to have considered our Government not merely as neutral, but as negative, and to have looked upon our moderation as the effect of fear or astonishment. Having endeavoured to bind our arms by internal dissensions, or at least to turn them against one another, it proceeded in the most unequivocal and audacious manner to threaten our allies; and assuming, upon I know not what metaphysical pretence, to break the connections and dissolve the treaties that connect the great Republic of Europe together, it declared itself determined to open the navigation of the Scheldt to Antwerp, which involves the ruin of Holland, and supposes the total inaction and dishonour of England.

BUT the Government, attentive to the progressive usurpations of France, and desirous to prevent an attack on the one hand, or to inspire the
 necessary

necessary courage into our allies on the other, had officially assured the United Provinces* of its resolution to adhere to the Treaty of 1787, and maintain them in their just right to the controul of a river, which, flowing to the sea through the territories of the Republic, was undoubtedly subject to their dominion, if the Treaty of Munster, and so many others which confirm it, had never existed. In this right they had been guaranteed by France in the year 1785†. That Court had meditated an accommodation between them and the Emperor, who, availing himself of the misfortunes of the Republic, and the just resentment as well as the weakness of Great-Britain, pretended as sovereign of Brabant to open the navigation of the Scheldt from Antwerp to the sea; a claim which was contested by the Court of France, and by the Comte de Mirabeau, who, then resident in London, employed his talents to persuade the Ministry of his country to maintain the faith of Treaties, and defend the rights of the Dutch against this extraordinary invasion; a circumstance peculiarly worthy of notice, since by the Revolution of 1787 we stand in the place of France with regard to the United Provinces, and are bound to secure them in those rights to

* November 16th.

† Treaty signed at Paris Sept. 20th.

the guaranty of which we have succeeded by the treaty of that year. But it is not my intention to enter at present more deeply into the discussion either of our obligations or our interests with regard to the protection of Holland : in the course of this Letter an opportunity will offer itself for me to inquire into them with more exactness, and to take them into the fullest consideration.

I HAVE now, Sir, sketched out the situation of the Country during this eventful year ; and though I have cautiously abstained from colouring my picture, I may hope that it will present, with force and clearness, the great outlines of the design. You will see, on the one hand, a great and generous nation disdaining to profit by the misfortunes and misconduct of a weak and guilty neighbour, diffembling affronts and injuries, endeavouring to guard itself from dangers by its internal regulations and prudence, and stifling the voice of resentment, till lesser States, which depend upon it for protection, are exposed to invasion and conquest from a base misconstruction of its magnanimous forbearance ; and, on the other, you will contemplate a wild and madding people, with no force but their numbers, no power but their crimes, treading back the steps of barbarism, and precipitating them-

themselves without thought or foresight towards conquest and extermination; restrained by no ties, no compacts, no morality; invading and destroying every thing; distinguishing neither friendship, enmity, nor neutrality; pretending to give laws which it spurns, and liberty which it knows not, to the nations it spoils and ravages; dissolving the bands of the civil union, and tearing asunder the ties that unite men together in states, cities, societies; trampling upon duty, religion, allegiance, patriotism; whatever has been held sacred or been found useful to mankind; you would contemplate this people polluting and poisoning the sources of public information, blowing up the coals of sedition, and spreading misfortune and contagion round them, till all Europe, held in suspense and anxiety at home, and occupied in allaying civil wars and dissensions, should not dare to look abroad to check the progress of their conquests, or interpose between their ambition and the ruin and dispersion of its members: at least, Sir, this is what you would have beheld, if I had been a faithful painter, or possessed any part of your imagination and abilities.

SUCH was the critical situation of affairs: the rapid victories of the French arms, and the fanatic opinion of their invincibility, had given

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courage to the seditious at home ; and the hope of internal dissensions had inspired confidence back again into the French, till Holland seemed exposed without protection to the enterprizes of that people, and the attention and forces of Great Britain in danger of being confined and circumscribed to defend the internal tranquillity of the realm ; when Government, no longer able to palliate or dissemble the danger of our allies, or that which more immediately threatened ourselves, had recourse to the means with which the Constitution has intrusted the executive power for the defence of the country, by embodying the militia of several counties. The wise jealousy of our Constitution has provided that the Crown should never exert this important prerogative at a time when the Parliament should not be assembled, without being obliged by law to summon it within fourteen days after the issuing its orders to the lords lieutenants of counties. The alarm was general over the kingdom, the public funds experienced a rapid decrease in their value, individuals associated all over the kingdom for safety both to their persons and property, and to defend this admired Constitution ; against which, for the first time, the sophistry and impudence of conceited ignorance and vanity had declared an open attack, and hoping an alliance from the discontent and unhappiness

happiness scarce separable from the lower orders of mankind, had conceived the idea of a regular siege, and openly talked of the probability of a surrender.

SUCH, Sir, was the situation of the kingdom when the Parliament met. The eyes of all men were turned towards it, and towards no part of it so much as yourself. The temperate conduct you had observed in the spring, the negotiations and explanations which were known to have taken place during the summer, and a general good opinion which men who suspected the violence of your temper, entertained of the goodness of your heart; the extraordinary danger of the country, its safety exposed at home, its honour compromised abroad; the moral antipathy all good men bear to crimes, and the enormity of those which had been perpetrated during the recess, and were actually perpetrating at Paris; every circumstance and appearance of affairs promised the most entire union, the most honourable and patriotic coalition of parties. It was thought so worthy of a generous mind to support the dignity as well as the interests of its country; it was considered so worthy of yours to extinguish the ill-founded expectations and vain desires of the least fortunate classes of society; it appeared so great, so god-like, to

explain the true interests of the people, to recall or confirm them in their duty, to strengthen the hands of Government in the cause of the people, and protect the glory of the British name against the treacherous and ungrateful enterprizes of its ambitious and implacable enemy ; that your friends and your enemies expected with equal confidence its performance at your hands. I shall now take the liberty to remind you of the specious or equivocal language you have held in Parliament upon this important occasion ; of its tendency and natural effect upon the people ; of the encouragement it offers to France to persist in her hostile intentions ; to the discontented at home to persevere in their projects ; and, above all, of the bad and dishonourable counsels you have given to your country.

It was clear to the most ordinary capacity, that France relied upon our internal dissensions to carry on her ambitious projects against Holland ; and yet you asserted that unanimity upon this occasion would be pernicious. To whom then would unanimity be pernicious but to France, and to the abettors of France ? You denied the existence of insurrections at home, though the whole kingdom feels a general anxiety and fermentation, and trembles with subterraneous heavings, like volcanoes on the eve of
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eruptions; and you treated the fears of Government as a libel and calumny on the kingdom. What is the meaning of this equivocal language? How are we to pierce to the sense which you have enveloped in more than oracular obscurity? Is it a calumny upon the kingdom to say it contains traitors and rebels and confederates of France? Alas, Sir, this is but its misfortune; and it is not from you that we shall hear that the truth of it has exaggerated the libel. Were the Minister to have said in the Speech that the whole kingdom shewed a spirit of tumult and insurrection, it would have been a false and calumnious assertion; but is there no danger from treachery, none from bad men, because the best and wisest part of the people retain their loyalty to the Prince and their attachment to the Constitution? Was there no danger in 1715, or in 1745, because the majority of the nation maintained the principles of the Revolution of 1688? And is there no danger now because the vigilance of the Government and the spirit of the people have appeared sufficient to check, if not to extinguish it? That danger would have been very little, Sir, if you had fulfilled the just expectations of the Country, and the House of Commons had presented the appearance of unanimity: that unanimity would, in all probability, have carried despair into the bosoms of
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our enemies ; it would have defeated the views of the seditious at home ; it would have protected Holland, and have been attended with the fruits of victory without the hazards and misfortunes of war. Or if it had failed of these salutary effects, and the ambition and avarice of France had persisted, in spite of it, in its schemes of invasion, it would have encouraged our allies, and enabled us to yield them a more effectual, or at least a more durable, support.

“ SHALL we declare war without knowing whether we are to have commotions at home ? ” This, Sir, is a question you have put to Ministers ; and yet you are angry that, in proportion as the necessity of the war becomes nearer and plainer, they should manifest a greater anxiety to prevent commotions at home. But you had done better to have put this question to those gentlemen who are in habits of corresponding with France, for they could answer you with the nicest precision : they might, perhaps, have given an answer to your enquiry not exceedingly different from that which I shall take the liberty of offering. They might have told you, that we should not be in danger of the war without the hope and expectation of the commotions ; and if this hope of commotions were extinguished, and the unanimity of the Country
were

were evident, we should be freed from the war. They who make the war reckon upon the commotions to impede our succours, and detain our forces at home ; and they who make the commotions depend upon the events and upon the expences of the war, to bring the spirit of discontent and insurrection to its fullness and maturity, and subvert the Constitution by means of the impatience and unwillingness with which they have prepared the minds of the people to receive any new taxes or impositions.

THE war without the commotions could offer no very tempting prospects to the hopes of France ; and the commotions without the war could promise no very important alterations in the system of our Government to the speculative or the discontented at home : unanimity, therefore, in the Parliament upon this occasion was peculiarly desirable, and I think I may add it was doubly expected ; because it was known that it would have given the completest contradiction to the promises which had been sent from hence to Paris, and have irritated the Executive Council against their agents and emissaries who had deceived them with the false hopes of a rebellion in England ; and because it was scarce probable that they should think of attacking the United Provinces, when they were convinced

vinced they should be opposed by the whole forces of England.

UNANIMITY, therefore, would have been pernicious in the extreme; but to whom would it have been pernicious? To the views of our enemies and to the hopes of our traitors. It would have extinguished the fire of sedition on the one hand, and scarce have left us a doubt but between peace or victory. Either we should not be attacked through our allies, or the unanimity of the nation would have afforded the greatest prospects of success, and perhaps of advantage, in so just and defensive a war.

THE next part of your speech which I shall take notice of, is a passage which, I cannot help thinking, has a very strong tendency to make the discontented in the three kingdoms look up to you as a leader of power, abilities, and experience, prepared to adopt their quarrel, and to preside over their enterprizes.

“ WHAT, it may be asked (these I believe
 “ are your words, Sir), would I propose to do in
 “ hours of agitation like the present? I will an-
 “ swer openly: If there is a tendency in the
 “ Dissenters to discontent, because they conceive
 “ themselves unjustly suspected and cruelly ca-
 “ lumniated,

“ lumniated, I would instantly repeal the Test
 “ and Corporation Acts, and take from them all
 “ causes of complaint. If there were any per-
 “ sons tinctured with a Republican spirit, be-
 “ cause they thought the Representative govern-
 “ ment was more perfect in a Republic, I would
 “ endeavour to amend the representation of the
 “ Commons, and to prove that the House of
 “ Commons, though not chosen by all, should
 “ have no other interest than to prove itself the
 “ representative of all. If there were men dis-
 “ satisfied in Scotland, or Ireland, or elsewhere,
 “ on account of disabilities, exemptions, unjust
 “ prejudices, and of cruel restrictions, I would
 “ repeal the Penal Statutes, &c. &c.

“ WHAT instead of this is done? Suppress
 “ the complaint, check the circulation of know-
 “ ledge, command that no man shall read, or
 “ that as no man can kill a partridge under a
 “ hundred pounds a year, no man under twen-
 “ ty or thirty pounds a year shall dare to read or
 “ think.”

THIS language, Sir, I hold to be highly in-
 flammatory; and I think it has a tendency (which
 no doubt you did not design) to encourage every
 species of discontent, and to make all discon-
 tented persons expect you, some time or other,

to become the champion of their cause. You offer yourself pretty plainly to the Dissenters, whose discontent you acknowledge ; but you attribute it to unjust suspicions and cruel calumnies. The King's Speech, therefore, is not a calumny upon the nation but upon the Dissenters ; and if this body felt itself so unjustly suspected and so cruelly calumniated, since you are become their advocate, and an abler they could not have, let me ask you, Sir, Whether it would not have been wiser and honefter to have counselled them to purge themselves from the suspicion, and to have convinced the nation that they were perfectly well affected to the Constitution and Government ; that they entertained no correspondence, and relied upon no assistance from abroad, to wrest by force, from the weakness of Parliament or the fears of Administration, the abolition of those Acts, which, while it has wisdom and liberty, it will continue to maintain ? Let me ask you, If the doctrines of some of the most respectable persons amongst them are not dangerous or hostile in an extreme degree to the Government and Constitution of these kingdoms ? and whether it would not have given the great body of Dissenters a much better and more honourable title to the confidence they claim from Parliament, if they had seized this
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opportunity to abjure these opinions, and to give the nation a proof of their affection and attachment to the Constitution, by rejecting the assistance that was offered them from abroad, and proving that they would accept no advantages at the expence of a foreign war and a domestic commotion?

IF the conduct of the Dissenters had been more moderate upon this occasion, I protest, for one, that I should have felt myself more inclined and more warranted to have trusted them; but when I perceive that the country itself is indifferent to them, and that there are no means they will stick at to procure the satisfaction of their demands, I feel an involuntary impulse to suspect the good faith of their promises; and I conceive it to be a fatal treachery to the Constitution, to trust them with any power which they can turn against it.

THE cause of the Roman Catholics in Ireland, which you are also ready to espouse, is precisely the opposite to that of the Dissenters; but you are ready to preside over both. The Dissenters are a minority in England, and toleration is all they can claim as long as there shall be a na-

tional religion ; but the Roman Catholics are a great majority of the people of Ireland. The absurd and fatal desires of the Protestants of Ireland, which you also espoused in their day, to become separate and independent of the English Parliament, have thrown them into this fatal dilemma : Either they must depend upon England for the defence of their present establishments, or they must yield over not only their power but even their estates, which are alike usurpations in their origin, and were the fruits of victory and the forfeitures of misfortune.

IF no time can extinguish claims, and if there are no rights but what are imprescriptible, the Roman Catholics of Ireland have done well in preserving their title-deeds to their lands ; and when they are put in possession of the Government, they will be guilty of a worse blunder than has ever yet been reproached to the confusion of their ideas, if they neglect to put themselves in possession of their estates. This Revolution, which I am not afraid to own is the justest that can take place in the world upon the principles of imprescriptibility, will involve the ruin of a million of Irishmen who are in possession of the Government, and have established their

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own laws and religion, by which means they have protected themselves against the majority of the kingdom. Ireland has always been held as a conquered province, though the policy of this Country has been to dissemble the nature of its tenure, and the softer title of Sister Kingdom has succeeded to the odious pretension of conquest.

THE Protestants of Ireland are an English colony, and by the policy and the power of England they have preserved the dominion over the posterity of the indigenæ of the soil : but with a more than Bœotian dullness, they have endeavoured to emancipate themselves from protection ; they have fled from safety, and withdrawn themselves from the salutary power and controul of Great Britain. Let the Parliament of independent Ireland extricate itself from these difficulties into which it has precipitated itself ; that of England is happily removed from the quarrel, and has no duty but to moderate in the contest, and to interpose its good offices to procure a final settlement and tranquillity.

You cannot therefore wonder if persons who are unable to conceive why you alluded to the discontented in Ireland, or in Scotland, or
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(in that broad term you have made use of) “ any “ where else,” unless it were that you were desirous to encourage the hopes of those who look only for a head to give weight and body to their designs against the Constitution of this kingdom, should consider this part of your conduct with extreme seriousness and apprehension.

As to the speculative opinions which may be entertained in the kingdom hostile to our system of government, you assert that they are of the “ very essence of liberty :” but speculative opinions may as well be entertained in Japan or at Constantinople, as at London or Amsterdam ; you must mean therefore to say, that the liberty of publishing speculative opinions hostile to our system of government is the very essence of liberty ; and a more false or a more dangerous principle was never advanced, more false in fact, or more dangerous in its relation to the present dangers that surround us.

It is certainly of the essence of liberty that no Officer of Government should interfere to stop the thoughts of men in their way to the press ; but it is a false inference that the publication of writings hostile to our system of government are therefore legal, and an absurd one that they are of the essence of liberty : it is of the essence of liberty

liberty that one abuse should not be checked by a greater abuse, and the publication of treasons is deservedly considered as a less and preferable evil to an “*imprimatur*.”

BUT the moment such a publication has appeared, the crime which it was not safe to prevent has been committed, and the sale and dispersion of it becomes criminal too. Far from any State or Constitution whatsoever tolerating the propagation of doctrines which are calculated to impair the respect and affection which ought to be borne towards it by the people, and which are necessary to its protection and preservation, I believe I may venture to assert that it is a crime in every nation under heaven, and is the greatest of all in our own.

THE people therefore, Sir, are not forbid to read or to think, but it is forbidden to corrupt and poison the mind of the people, and disturb the repose and order of society. The capacity of the people (for whom I have not less respect than you, Sir) is not so able as you are to separate truth from error, and to detect every specious falsehood which is glossed and fineered over with the appearances of truth. The effects of some of the falsest and most absurd doctrines upon their understandings is already visible in so alarming
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a degree, as to afford a strong proof that they are not to be trusted with every book which it may be of “the essence of liberty” to publish; and to make it probable that they are not all of them of opinion with you, Sir, that the “Rights of Man” is a libel upon all government; since some of them seem to consider its author as their true friend and philosopher, and few of them are able to distinguish between abstract truths and principles, and the insidiousness with which it is recommended to have recourse to them.

I AM not more a friend to Associations than you, Sir, because I think that the advantage they can produce is trifling and transitory, and the danger is serious and permanent: I think they have a direct tendency to draw away the attention and confidence of the people from Government, and a remote one to usurp upon its functions, and assume powers that are otherwise delegated by the Constitution. Still less do I approve of such absurd and ridiculous combinations as publish the exploded jargon of Jacobitism, and reject the new Republic of France, not because it is defiled and polluted with blood, but because it is not anointed. Persons so weak and so infatuated, so ridiculous and childish, ought to escape not only punishment but satire, for they are unworthy of being treated with any
species

species of argument, and are beneath even contempt ; but you cannot surely confound the innocent absurdity of this species of treason with the artful and methodical design of subverting the Government by means of the discontents of poverty and the repinings of labour ; of involving the nation in a war in order to give hope to rebellion at home, or in rebellion to give a chance of success to our enemies in the war. The treasons of Mr. Chairman REEVES are not quite of so black and dangerous a description as the doctrines of PRIESTLEY and PAINE ; nor is the Association at the Crown-and-Anchor likely to prove so hostile or so fatal to Government and the Constitution (the love of which, probably, it imagines it to be more important at this conjuncture to inculcate, than to examine all its details), as the Executive Council of France, which is both able to comprehend and to destroy them.

THE love of the Constitution is compared by Lord BOLINGBROKE to the charity of the Gospel, which covers a multitude of sins. According to this noble writer, all faults may be forgiven to a statesman who should possess this single virtue ; and all qualities, all merits, all successes, cannot be pleaded in pardon of him who should want it. You are conscious of this, Sir, and therefore you profess your allegiance to it, and

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your admiration of its wonderful structure, which you thank God was not made in a day, but is the result of gradual and progressive wisdom. Let us take care, Sir, that it be not destroyed in a day ; and let us join, if you would not disdain so humble an associate, to disarm or to discredit all those who would bring it into danger, under whatever pretence ; whether they affect to admire and to wish well to it, and then detail its imperfections, its abuses, or deficiencies, and exaggerate these imperfections, abuses and deficiencies, till they can infer that it ought to be abolished and destroyed ; whether they say with Mr. PAINE, that we have no Constitution at all ; or with other persons, whose names I will spare while I have hope of their contrition, that the Constitution is nothing but aristocracy and injustice. You know, Sir, that the Constitution with all its abuses is the best system of government that has ever been devised by human invention ; and since we cannot at present reform it without endangering the whole of it, let us wait till our enemies abroad will give us leisure to begin this salutary work, and let us not enter upon it at a time when such an occupation would abandon our allies to their enterprises, and throw us into a situation in which we should have to contend not for our Constitution, but for our fields, our fires, and our altars.

It is now time for me to take notice of the Motion you have made in the House of Commons for “addressing his Majesty to send a Minister to Paris, in order to negotiate with the present Government of France relative to their dispute with Holland.”

THE baseness and enormity of such a proposition have been sufficiently exposed in the answers you received from your friends and your opponents; it is not my intention to follow them; nor is there need of any efforts of mine to convince the people of England that the friendship of the French Republic ought not to be purchased by our concurrence in the murder of LEWIS the XVIth and his family. The spirit of the country is awakened, and, thank God! there is no danger of Great Britain becoming the—Ally shall I call it? Oh! no, Sir,—the Accomplice of the Parricides of France.

BUT why should we negotiate, if it be true, as you have asserted, that the navigation of the Scheldt is not an object for which even the Dutch themselves would wish us to undertake the war? And what negotiation, if we are to negotiate, can be more effectual than the Official Declaration * that we will protect the rights of the

* November 16th.

United Provinces, and the preparations which we are making to give effect to it ?

WHAT Minister (if any man qualified to be a Minister could undertake this negotiation) could say more, or have more to say, than what is said in the Declaration, or threaten more, than to protect our allies ?

THE whole negotiation is in the spirit, and ought to have been in the unanimity of the Country. The French understand no law but that of force, and have no fear but that of resistance.

I AM not, Sir, of the opinion of an Honourable Gentleman, who would go to war because the French have destroyed the elegant monuments of antiquity. Were I to counsel a war of vengeance, it should be a vengeance against their crimes, not their follies. I would vindicate the works of God, not of man ; not of art, but of nature. It should not be the statues they have mutilated ; nor the pictures they have defaced, for which I would demand reparation ; I would take an account of the murders, of the massacres they have committed ; of the cruelties they have offered to the living, and of the insults to the dead ; of their outrages against the human form, against the human mind ; against the privilege of sex, and
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the delicacy of nature ! Still less can I think with that Honourable Gentleman, that “ this “ Country was never so able in regard to “ strength and resources, and that the direct “ contrary is the case of France.” I would not dissemble the difficulty or danger of the war, because I would not have it undertaken lightly, or lightly abandoned. I would have the people see the justice and the necessity of the war, that it may willingly contribute to its unavoidable expences, and be able to bear with fortitude any possible reverses to which we are liable. Our enemies expect, that as soon as the Government shall be obliged to demand assistance from the purses of the people, the war must be abandoned, from their unwillingness or refusal to contribute : and surely it is better the people should abandon their allies while they may yet find a species of safety in submission, than desert them in the middle of a war, when they shall have provoked their invaders by resistance, and irritated their conquerors by acts of hostility, and perhaps of despair.

THE resources of England are, no doubt, as great as ever they were, provided there existed that unanimity in the Country, without which it is impossible to call them into action. The real resources of France too, no doubt, are exhausted, but

but they have one of a formidable nature, and whose force it is difficult to calculate, in the enthusiasm and fanatical spirit of their armies. The perpetual and unaccountable successes they have met with against the best disciplined and best provided armies of Europe, are proofs too strong to be questioned, that if we have war, we are to expect opposition; and if we have opposition, we are liable to checks and reverses. I cannot, however, think this enthusiasm will survive the successes they meet with, or enable them to bear defeat, and make head against misfortune. But it will not be improper here to take some notice of this wonderful fanaticism, and to enquire whether it be of such a nature as to warrant all the hopes and all the apprehensions that are entertained of it by the different parties who are interested in the event.

I HAVE been led to turn my thoughts very much to the enthusiasm of the French armies, because I perceived that people relied more upon it in France, and were more astonished and intimidated by it in other countries, than appeared to me to be reasonable. Those who mean by enthusiasm nothing more than an extraordinary degree of eagerness in any particular cause, will naturally recollect that the French nation has never been remarked for the constancy
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of its tastes or attachments. It is the nature of warm minds to exhaust their passions quickly, and to abandon projects with the same precipitation with which they adopt them. In this sense we may speak of an enthusiasm for NECKAR, MIRABEAU, or LA FAYETTE, but I think not with propriety for any cause, system, or principle, whether moral, religious, or political. But the enthusiasm which we are to speak of is, in the sense of the chiefs of the French philosophy, an extreme ardour and energy in the cause for which they are engaged, a self-devotedness in its favour, a blind courage and confidence of success. This is neither a true nor a natural definition of enthusiasm, yet as it is the only one consistent with its own tenets their philosophy can supply, it is in this light that we ought to examine it; and it will be easy to perceive, by comparing it with such instances of other enthusiasm as history will present to us, how little calculated it is to produce the same effects, or to create the same fervour and perseverance.

FANATICISM, no doubt, has made its conquests in the world as well as prudence and discipline, but it seems only then to have been crowned with a solid and final success when it has been conducted by art and ambition, and when it has been an instrument, or at least an
auxiliary,

auxiliary, to other designs. Enthusiasm is defined to be a vain belief of a private revelation, a vain confidence of divine favour, or of an intercourse with the Supreme Being. It must therefore exclusively belong to religious and pious persons, and is the reaction of faith upon the mind, which, making its own convictions meritorious, presumes upon some immediate acceptance and reward from above. Such might have been the enthusiasm of Mahomet, but that of his soldiers was of the most fatal and irresistible kind: their acceptance was, indeed, one degree farther removed from Heaven, to whose peculiar favour and protection they could not think they had any other pretension, than as they were faithful and obedient to him whom they believed to be its favourite and elect. Besides, therefore, that contempt of life and danger which they derived from the hopes and promises he held out to them, their fanaticism secured their subordination and discipline; for their doubts and even their fears were infidelity, and their disobedience was impiety and sacrilege.

THE enthusiasm that led our ancestors to Palestine, though it originated in similar opinions, was not capable to produce equal effects; because though the soldiers of the Cross had set life with all its endearments at nothing, when
opposed

opposed to the crown of martyrdom they expected in the quarrel, or at the tomb of their Saviour, yet the link of enthusiasm was broken, and it was not certain that every movement or command of GODFREY or RAIMOND, of RICHARD or PHILIP, was the result of inspiration; nor was it easy to discern, in their disputes, which party was favoured or distinguished by Heaven.

THE prayers, the masses of GODFREY, the humiliation and fasts of the christian armies, were not calculated, besides, to inspire that ardent confidence, that elevated zeal, which were kindled in so extraordinary a degree by the bold promises and confident assurances of MAHOMET.

THE fanaticism of the Druids and that of the Peruvians, besides their physical and moral inferiority to their enemies, had this peculiar disadvantage, that it could only be exerted in defence: and polytheism is, besides, in its nature incapable of exciting it in its greatest degree; because though a Pagan may believe himself to be in the highest degree of favour with his God, he cannot be sure but that his enemy may be also protected by some other Deity in an equal or superior degree. WODEN and THOR were not idle in the defence of our ancestors, but they were overpowered by JUPITER and MARS, just

as the temples of **ATHALIBA** were compelled to admit the deities of **FRANCIS PIZARRO**. The contests of all ignorant nations appear to have been struggles between their respective gods ; and the Jews themselves, notwithstanding their pure theism, were inclined, upon every defeat and disaster which happened to them, to suspect that the gods of their neighbours were too powerful for their own.

THE followers of **CROMWELL**, as well as of **MAHOMET**, had a standard in heaven as well as upon earth ; and they were led on by generals, who, though they preached or prophesied, knew well how to secure all human means of success, and to direct to the most useful purposes that fanatical spirit which they knew how to excite : they calculated its force with precision, and were able to regulate and govern its movement ; to confine it within the exactest limits of discipline and obedience, or to let it forth with resistless fury upon their astonished enemies. Though they fought for conquest or for liberty, yet they fought for Heaven too ; and, what was of more consequence, they thought that Heaven fought for them ; and they believed that those who should not survive to share in the triumph, would be transported to seats of immortal bliss, and rewarded with those
eternal

eternal pleasures, or that crown of glory, which were destined for the faithful who fell :

inde ruendi

In ferrum mens prona viris, animæque capaces
Mortis, & ignavum redituræ parcere vitæ.

I NEED not recall to your memory, Sir, the effects of this genuine enthusiasm; nor do I see any reason to expect, or rather to dread, a repetition of them from that which is under our consideration. It is not every thing which is visionary that can inspire it, nor is every opinion that is vain and metaphysical an equally good basis upon which to rear this Colossus of fanaticism. Equality is, no doubt, as illusory a promise as the paradise of MAHOMET, or the reign of the Saints upon the earth; but it is not so well calculated to abstract and absorb all the faculties of the mind: it entertains no pious ambition of celestial distinctions; it nurses no fond reveries of rapturous delights and extatic enjoyments; it neither broods with melancholy and meditation, nor expatiates with imagination and fancy; its hope is vulgar and its promise common; and for its martyrs there are neither palms, nor banquets, nor unfading crowns, nor ever-blooming Houries.

THE enthusiasm, therefore, of the French armies seems to me to be nothing more than the natural result of success; for I am able to disco-

ver no principle which is likely to support them under defeat, disgrace, or disappointment. Indeed enthusiasm and atheism are irreconcilable terms; and since irreligion has carefully been instilled into them, as a species of opium to lull their rebel and unphilosophical consciences to rest, or presented to them as a sponge which could alone efface from their memory the crimes they have been lured to commit, it appears to me clear, that there exists for them no alternative between complete success and complete ruin, and that even the suspences of victory are the beginnings of doubt and remorse, of defeat, desertion, and despair.

I HAVE been the more particular in this enquiry, Sir, for a reason I have mentioned before—Because I would not have the people of England undertake a war of success, but a war of principle; I would not have our perseverance to depend upon our victories but our rights, and upon the necessity we all ought to feel of defending, under any fortune, our allies, our interests, and our honour.

I now come to enquire into your assertion, that even the Dutch themselves would not wish us to undertake the war, to secure them in their exclusive right to the navigation of the Scheldt.

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You know, Sir, as well as any-body, that Holland will never defend this navigation for itself, because it reckons that no peace can be made in Europe without placing it upon the footing upon which it has remained ever since the peace of Westphalia in 1648. It will therefore content itself with protection against the violation of that and subsequent treaties which confirm it, as it did in the year 1785, when the Emperor JOSEPH the Second attempted the same usurpation which is now the object of the French Republic. The protest was sufficient for Holland, because it knew that its ally, whether it were France or England, must be sensible that the alliance, instead of an accession of force, would become a heavy charge, if the navigation was made free up to Antwerp. It knew that, possessing the territory upon both banks of the Scheldt towards its mouths into the sea, it had the same right to impose duties or prohibitions, and in a less questionable shape, than what is practised by the King of Denmark in the passage of the Sound; because Denmark possesses only one of its shores, and because there is a mighty difference between the mouths of rivers which may and frequently do arise in one kingdom and flow through another, and the keys of an immense Mediterranean which washes the coasts of many independent nations, and is

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not only common but necessary to them all. It knew well besides, that the Low Countries, with the accession of freedom to the port of Antwerp, would be an acquisition too vast to any of the leading Powers in Europe, to be quietly submitted to by the others. Resolved therefore never to become the principals in a war upon this account, they have long determined to submit to momentary superiority, and to let the question decide itself by the arms or negotiations of the governing States of Europe. When they belonged to France, they experienced the “good offices” of France; because France was aware that they could not yield this freedom of the Scheldt even to so contemptible a maritime power as the Emperor, without not only losing the value of the Dutch alliance, but establishing a dangerous rival in commerce and politics upon their own frontier. The eagerness of the Emperor to acquire commerce and naval consequence, is compared by M. DE MIRABEAU to the peevish desires of a child that cries for the moon. Yet the loss of the trade and wealth of Holland, at that time the ally of France, appeared to him and to the Comte de VERGENNES (the greatest minister, or at least the last great minister that France has possessed in the present century) to be of so much importance to the interests of France, as to require the interposition of all its “good offices;”

“ fices ;” by which I fuppofe you mean, Sir, the drawing of its troops to the frontiers of Austrian Flanders, and marking it out a camp for eighty thoufand men in the plains of Lens. Of what confequence ought it then to appear to us, who muft not only lofe its pofitive value in the power and wealth of our ally, but who muft fee it added to the enormous preponderance of our enemies ? The juftice is exactly the fame with regard to us in the prefent moment, and to France in the year 1785. Each of us have alike felt the *duty*, and acknowledged the *engagement* and the *neceffity* to protect our ally ; but the intereft and the policy are fo much more cogent with us, as France is already the greateft naval and commercial State after our own, and we fhall not by our fupinenefs or our cowardice aggrandize an inland Sovereign fighting after the moon, but an ambitious maritime Power that would monopolize the ocean itfelf.

I do not think it neceffary to prove the great interefts which the Dutch have in this right; they were ftated with great force and precision in the conferences at Bruffels in 1784* ; and they have never been controverted, fo far as I know, by any perfon intitled to an answer, if I except that fpecies of indirec contradiction which you have

* Auguft 23.

given to them in an assertion, which I am not willing to believe you could seriously or deliberately have permitted yourself to have made. These interests have been acknowledged and established, together with the right, by a series of treaties which have succeeded one another in the course of nearly a century and a half, in which no material alteration has been made with regard to them, and in which almost every Power in Europe has by turns become their champion or their guarantee.

THERE remains only one point upon which I shall take the liberty of detaining you any longer. It is the opposition you have given to the Alien Bill, and the objections you have suggested to it in Parliament. It is there only that I presume to consider your conduct. Your enemy might pursue you to your Clubs and Assemblies; but the friend of his country will draw a veil over those licentious meetings, which are a disgrace to the age as well as to you, Sir. With me your treasonable toasts, your seditious eloquence shall find every excuse that can be pleaded for the intemperance of wine, or the contagion of society; and indeed, while they are confined to those tumultuous circles of your partizans and dependents, they do not appear to me to be attended with all the danger that some persons apprehend
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from them. They may influence, it is true, but they cannot corrupt; they may lead to crimes and violence, but they cannot *mislead*. *Summa venire et audire culpa*. The law holds, I believe, Sir, that an injury cannot be done to him who consents to it, nor a rape be committed where there is a desire to be seduced. I remember too, that it was a maxim of the Penal Code of our German ancestors while they were yet in their forests, though even there they had a Government, an Order, and a Constitution, that crimes only should be exposed in their punishment, while vice and flagitiousness were carefully concealed from the public eye.

IN Parliament, then, you have opposed a prudential law that was loudly demanded by the just fears of the whole nation, which could not behold without apprehension the extraordinary and sudden influx of foreigners, and was besides alarmed and provoked by the knowledge, that amongst them were concealed many of the principal actors in those bloody tragedies of France, which no man has condemned more emphatically, or lamented, I do not doubt, more sincerely than yourself. You asserted, that there was no necessity nor occasion for this Bill, though you knew that about eighteen thousand foreigners had suddenly taken refuge in the country,

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These,

These, you said, were harmless men; but you dissembled that they were mixed with spies, with emissaries, and incendiaries, and that the object of the Bill was to enable Government to distinguish between the persecuted refugee and the hired assassin; you dissembled that the real Emigrant desired and implored the Bill, and that it could only be an object of terror and dislike to the disguised traitor, who profaned the asylum and violated the hospitality of the country! Give me leave to ask you, Could you blame the suspicions of such as beheld with anxiety and horror the protection you accorded to the outcasts of the human race, to men disgusting with blood and familiar with massacres, to public murderers, to the hangmen of Revolutions? Can you wonder that, in proportion as your arguments are echoed and your name applauded in that *immoral* and *impure* Convention which deluges its country with crimes and misery, you should decline in credit in the Senate of England? Can you complain that, while you are the hero of BRISSOT, and the admiration of that accursed assembly of plunderers and parricides, you should forfeit your influence and ascendancy in a British Parliament? Can you complain of desertion, can you complain of abuse and malice? Alas, Sir, you are celebrated by atheists and regicides, what calumny

funny can you dread, what libel remains for you to pardon?

It is true, indeed, that you could not well foresee the stupidity of those Ministers of the new Republic, who, relying implicitly upon your sagacity, have pushed your arguments to an extreme of absurdity that, I think, is only to be found in one diplomatic paper in the world: I will submit it to you, Sir, than whom no man is a better judge, and than whom, I sincerely believe, no man is more disinterested or impartial; it is signed "CHAUVELIN," and was presented to Lord Grenville on the 7th of January 1793.

THIS Minister, in the name of his Republic, accuses the British Government of having infringed, by the various clauses and provisions of the Alien Bill, the IVth article of the Commercial Treaty. He says, that the Executive Council of France "had a right to expect, knowing the religious fidelity of the English people in fulfilling their engagements, that the French would be positively exempted from this law."

Now, Sir, this solicitude of the French Republic for the ease, convenience, and security of its Emigrants in England, is of so singular a nature, that it would not be unpleasant to con-

trait it with the various requisitions to disarm, to
 disband, and to banish them, which have been
 made by the National Assembly and Executive
 Government in so many other States of Europe
 where they have attempted to find protection
 and security. The injury offered to a nation by
 measures of hardship or severity towards such of
 its subjects as it affects to consider as rebels, as
 it proscribes and punishes with death, is, cer-
 tainly, not easily to be comprehended ; and is,
 I think, Sir, with submission to your better in-
 formation, now, for the first time, assigned in a
 state-paper as a cause of complaint and the
 ground of hostilities. France declared war
 against the House of Austria, and has invaded
 its territories in the Low Countries, as well as
 the Free Towns and Episcopal States of the Em-
 pire, for an imputed favour and protection ac-
 corded to its Emigrants ; and it is ready to
 declare war against England for disarming, for
 watching, and even for suspecting them. And
 all this, because in the year 1786, while it had
 yet its antient and legal Government, it had been
 stipulated between the two countries, “ That
 “ it should be free for subjects and inhabitants
 “ of the respective states of the two sovereigns
 “ to come and go freely in security, without
 “ any permission or passport, general or special,
 “ either by land or sea, and to return, sojourn,
 “ or pass, and also to purchase or acquire, as
 “ they

“ they shall chuse, all things necessary for their
 “ subsistence or their use, and they shall be
 “ treated reciprocally with all sorts of kindness
 “ and favour,” &c. &c. &c.

IF, the moment after this treaty had been executed, the French Court, insincere and ambitious, but not more insincere and ambitious than the nation (for nothing is more absurd than to reproach Ministers with crimes foreign to their age and country), had determined to send over eighteen thousand picked soldiers, we were bound, no doubt, by the letter of the treaty to have supplied them with all things necessary for their use and subsistence, and to have treated them with all sorts of kindness and favour. To have disarmed them, to have demanded their motives, to have asked for their passports, would have been an infraction of the IVth Article of the Treaty of Navigation and Commerce, and would have surprized the French nation, “ who
 “ so well knew the religious fidelity of the English people in fulfilling their engagements.” Good God, Sir ! did this egregious Minister never imagine that some one among us would demand, Whether it were more probable that the French Executive Council would intercede with Great Britain, and even go to war with it, for the sake of Emigrants whom it has plundered,

dered, persecuted, and proscribed, or for the assassins whom it employs, encourages, and rewards?

THE most inveterate of your enemies, Sir, could scarce suspect you of an unity of heart, but to imagine you had a communion of councils with such blunderers as these, is a calumny upon your understanding, which no man can possess malignity or credulity enough to believe.

BUT it will not be improper to inquire how the English have been treated in France since the Revolution, notwithstanding the reciprocity of the IVth Article of the Treaty of Navigation and Commerce.—Have they not been subjected to passports, to examinations, to domiciliary visits, to the most jealous and the most rigorous police? Have not their arms, their horses, and even their saddles, been forcibly taken from them? Have they not been carried before municipalities and magistrates, and forced to give the minutest account of themselves and their motives? Have not their features been noted down, their stature measured, their hand-writing witnessed? Have women, have Ambassadors been respected? Have not these Ministers, who are sacred in every country under Heaven where
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there are names for law and polity, been retarded, insulted, and menaced? Have not English officers and gentlemen been maltreated and imprisoned for endeavouring to support them by their presence and councils, and to defend the rights and the honour of their nation committed in the person of the King's Minister, and the violation of his dispatches? His Majesty's servants, who accepted satisfaction for those injuries, were not insensible to the indignity offered to the British nation, nor the violation of the treaty, but they knew that the unforeseen circumstances, the dangers and distractions that agitated a kingdom, might well excuse to its neighbours the provisions of an internal police, and the rigours which were exacted by a just foresight or a real necessity.

I HAVE stated these circumstances at some length, and with more precision than I should otherwise have thought necessary, had it not been for the dissimulation and perfidy with which some persons have endeavoured to conceal all the real causes of the war, and to found them exclusively in I know not what *ill will* or antipathy of the King's servants to the principles of the French Revolution; a Revolution which was fostered in its beginning by the vows of all orders, distinctions, and parties in the State, but
which,

which, in proportion as it has developed and discovered itself, is likely, I fear, Sir, to become fatal for many years to the cause of real liberty all over the world, by the fears, the hatred, and the horrors it has inspired during the series and progression of its crimes, and which are now probably riveted for ages in the minds and memory of man, by the consummation of the most barbarous, unjust, unnecessary, and impolitic murder, that disgraces the annals of the human history, the manners of any nation, the morals of any age.

To return to the policy of the war, I must own, Sir, that if the right of the United Provinces, and if our own interests and duties be certain and evident, and if our enemies have no reason to presume upon perpetual success in their projects of violence and injustice, nor upon any perseverance and constancy under the unavoidable disasters and misfortunes of the war, of which at length they are beginning to taste; and if the series and progress of their usurpations from their invasion of the rights of the German Princes in Lorraine and Alsace, of the sovereignty of Avignon and Savoy, to their violations of the laws of nations and the compacts of neutrality at Frankfort and Geneva; and, finally, if their menaces and violence against
 our

our own nearest allies have not frightened us out of our acknowledged good sense and our national character, I can see no good reason, Sir, why we should not declare a war of principle, and a war that must become popular in proportion as its justice and necessity become generally understood in the nation, unless the Executive Council of France, if it still possesses any power over the Generals (for I confess I know not with whom it were best to treat, if we were inclined to it; whether with the Council or the Army; with the Convention, the Municipality, or the Mayor; whether with Pethion or Marat; whether at Paris or at Marseilles); unless, in short, the French people will abstain from the invasion of our ally, and give to ourselves satisfaction for the base and hostile machinations they have carried on in the heart of the kingdom against its internal peace and security, as well as offer us a proper security to respect the faith of treaties, and conform to the law of nations for the future.

HAVING now concluded what appeared to me most important at this time to observe in the critical situation of our affairs, and having endeavoured to place the question with clearness and precision in what I conceived to be its true point of view, will you permit me, Sir, to re-

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vert to yourself, and to submit to your serious consideration, Whether a longer continuance in the line of conduct you have lately adopted be not likely to increase the ambition and add to the activity of our enemies, and to foment and encourage the projects of the seditious at home? Whether it has not a direct tendency to provoke complaint and to flatter discontent, and to revive every dangerous hope that seemed extinguished by the King's Proclamation in May? Whether it may not expose us to the danger of the war from the appearance of disunion at home, and to commotions at home, from the expectations that are entertained of the war? and, lastly, will you give me leave to ask of you, Whether you think the great and elevated station you have so long enjoyed with the united applauses of every party in the kingdom, with the universal approbation of your country, can be well or virtuously exchanged for the opprobrious honours of a Club or an Association? Will you descend from such an height to be celebrated by Mobs or to preside over Factions? Will you quit this dignified, this glorious post for such mean and precarious popularity? Surely it might satisfy every desire of generous ambition, and transmit your name with the fairest and best-earned honours to posterity.—Return, Sir, return, to this bright pre-eminence; believe me
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it is your place, you cannot so well become any other. You have shewn that you possess the magnanimity to forgive; can you want that magnanimity which teaches to accept of forgiveness? You have had the candour to confess your errors and to repair your mistakes. While the nature of man shall be to be frail and imperfect, this virtue will approach the nearest of all others to perfection. Be just then to yourself and to your Country; the breach is not yet irreparable between you; she courts you once more to her bosom; her arms are stretched out to receive you; she offers you her confidence, her affection;—but you must be contented with the honours she bestows and the place she assigns you: greater are not to be desired with innocence, nor to be enjoyed with impunity.

London, Jan. 26, 1793.

T H E E N D .

E R R A T A .

Page 8, line 3, dele —

15, — 11, for *meditated* read *mediated*.

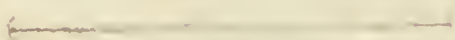
30, — 25, for *are* read *is*.

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